

Case File

Project

CASE HISTORY - IMPROVED MAINTENANCE OF ACTION
MEDICAL FILES, PROJECT #5-68, DATED 11 MAY 55

THE PROBLEM:

The Medical files of Agency personnel were housed in 21 letter size 5 drawer cabinets arranged around the walls of a 12' x 13' room with 2 entrances and 1 large window. In the center of the room was a desk and typing table. Expansion of the files was necessary but no more cabinets could be placed in the room and no other space was available. The Acting Registrar, Mr. [REDACTED], requested advice as to the use of shelf files in lieu of the 5 dr. cabinets as a means of gaining additional space.

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FINDINGS:

(1) No expansion space could be realized by installing shelf file
All of the folders in these files were active and the frequency of reference would necessitate limiting file operations to a height of 6 shelves. Because of space limitations, only 11 sections of shelving could be placed in the room. The 11 sections with 6 shelves each had a capacity of 198 linear feet of file space, as compared to 210 feet in the existing cabinets.

(2) The crowded condition was caused by use of improper file folders and the method of fastening.

The folders in use were ^{17 1/2"} kraft with 3 position triangular celluloid tabs. Acco fasteners were added in the 1st and 3d positions as each case was made up. Approximately 1/3 of the material filed was 5"x 8" so that the ends of the folders with the fasteners were always much thicker, ~~1 1/2"~~ 1 1/2" point. Kraft folders with built in fasteners in the 1st and 4th positions require only 6" per 100 folders as compared to 12" for the folder and fasteners in use. Additional space ^{was} gained by use of the 4th position for fastening which permits an even thickness of the folders on each end.

(3) Accuracy and speed in filing and finding could be improved by a change in the charge out system, the manner of labeling the folder, and use of guides.

Written requests for folders were forwarded to the file room. The name was transcribed from the request to a charge card which was then filed in place of the folder. The writing of charge cards by files personnel was eliminated by having the requests submitted on 3 x 5 cards which were inserted in pocket type charge cards.

All labels on the new folders were placed on the left end to provide for straight line filing instead of the 3 positions previously used. Straight line filing is faster and more accurate.

No guides were in use to assist in quickly locating the proper file position. A standard set of preprinted alphabetical name guide was installed and then enlarged to meet the needs of this particular file.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Reduced the file space required by one-third and eliminated the need to convert to shelf filing or to procure additional file cabinets by changing the type of folder and fasteners used.
2. Filing and finding rates were increased an estimated 25% through the change to straight line filing; use of proper guides; and relief from the packed drawers with filing on the bias caused by the greater thickness on one end of all folders.
3. Eliminated a time consuming writing operation by using the request as the "charge out" instead of transcribing the name from the request to the "charge out" card.

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